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41st Executive Seminar for International Diplomats

25th January – 3rd March 2017

1st row, from left to right:

Verena Michaeli (Programme Assistant), Vessela Atzeva (Bulgaria), Rita Zalite (Latvia), Mirat Urmat Uulu (Kyrgyzstan), Michael Roth (Minister of State for Europe), Valentina Fabia Roman Gómez (Colombia), Lena Hanning (Intern), Jane Park (United States)

2nd row, from left to right:

Farah Farrokhi (Islamic Republic of Iran), Shota Uraño (Japan), Ana Davitashvili (Georgia), Jaymion Hendricks (South Africa), Katarzyna Joniec (Poland), Raluca Truscanu (Romania), Andrés Pérez González (Chile)

3rd row, from left to right:

Roman Macovenco (Republic of Moldova), Ambassador (ret.) Dr Axel Berg (Programme Director), Stefan Biedermann (Head of Training for International Diplomats), Tianqing Kou (China), Jérôme Collard-Proulx (Canada), Elvis Shiweda (Namibia), Aušrinė Vysniūnaitė (Lithuania), Vismar Ravagnani Duarte Silva (Brazil), Dr Ondřej Picka (Czech Republic), András Molnár (Hungary)

»It is not the challenges and conflicts that make up the world of today, but our growing closeness and our shared responsibility.«

Ondřej Picka (Czech Republic)
Participant of IDL 41

The year 2017 marked the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Executive Seminar for International Diplomats. The seminar was initiated shortly after the end of the division of Europe and was intended for diplomats from Central and Eastern European countries. Those taking part in this year's 41st Executive Seminar hailed from 20 countries and five different continents. This shows how the world has changed over the last quarter of a century, and above all how Germany's role in the world has changed.

During our stay in Berlin, we had many interesting conversations, and at a time when many things seem to be changing in international politics. The EU is facing immense challenges. Transatlantic relations must be redefined and the liberal free trade order is in doubt. In addition to a new wave of terrorism, fresh territorial conflicts are also threatening international security. New media are injecting further impetus into globalisation and are changing our work as diplomats at the same time.

It was very exciting for us to discuss many of these topics with German interlocutors. Germany is an important partner for our countries and its involvement in the international community is growing. This is why it is important for us to understand the Federal Republic of Germany's decision-making processes. The six-week programme of the Executive Seminar for International Diplomats offered us a unique insight into the specifics of Germany's political culture.

During the many meetings that we attended, we were able to see how important it is for German foreign policy for Germany to be anchored in the EU and NATO. We examined German federalism and its role in foreign policy. The importance of associations and foundations in German democracy was another topic that we kept on coming back to. Last but not least, visits to leading German media outlets were among the highlights of our programme.

We not only recall the many new things that we learned, but also the countless shared experiences and the wonderful friendship that has grown between us. I believe that this friendship also strengthens our impression that it is not the challenges and conflicts that make up the world of today, but our growing closeness in an ever-shrinking world and our shared responsibility.

The programme was much more for us than "just" a further training course. We would like to thank Programme Director former Ambassador Axel Berg and his colleagues Verena Michaeli and Lena Hanning. We are grateful to them not only for the perfect organisation of the seminar, but also for the friendly atmosphere and the many wonderful shared moments we enjoyed.



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